

Lecture 2

Catholic Beliefs and Rituals

What are the core Catholic beliefs and rituals?

I Catholic Views of the World

- A Weak boundaries between natural and supernatural world
 - 1) Mystery and symbol
 - 2) Linking of religion with society and culture
 - 3) Connection of politics and religion
- B Saints and Sinners
- C No “end time” drama
- D Scripture and Tradition
 - 1) Interpretation of Old and New Testament
 - 2) Balance shifts over time
 - 3) Councils, pope’s teachings (**encyclical**=letter)
 - 4) Catholic doctrine defined in **Canon Law** and in theological doctrines

II Beliefs

1) Primacy of Works

- a) Sacraments not charity or faith
 - i) Sacramentalism
 - ii) Sacred is present in the things of the world
 - iii) Miraculous can be seen in nature
 - iv) Close gap between divine and human
 - v) Importance of beauty, the visual, elegance, objects

2) Works then faith

- a) Through ritual comes feeling
- b) Behavior then belief
- c) Movement, senses, community (grace) provokes belief

3) Must have community Belief is not enough

- a) Born into community
- b) Baptism at birth
- c) Not adult decision to be a part of the community
- d) Centralized, hierarchical authority
- e) Community tied together through the liturgy, rituals

4) Priesthood as Representative of Christ

- a) Priest is Christ’s representative on earth
- b) Only priest can conduct sacraments
- c) People through priest to God
- d) Total dedication, thus celibacy

- e) Symbolic connection to Christ, thus maleness

III Rituals

A) Mass

- 1) Celebration of the **Eucharist**
- 2) Re-enactment of the Last Supper
- 3) **Real Presence**
- 4) Divine Sacrifice
- 5) Done every day, Sunday mandatory

B) Sacraments

- 1) Sacred may be present in the things of the world
- 2) Sacraments give grace that enable salvation
- 3) No salvation outside of the church
- 4) **Baptism**, Eucharist (**Holy Communion**), **Penance** (Sacrament of Reconciliation, Confession,), **Confirmation**, **Matrimony**, **Anointing of the sick** (Extreme Unction, Last Rites)**Holy Orders**

C) Paraliturgical Devotions

- 1) Prayers for the Dead
- 2) **Cult of the Saints**, novenas and **Virgin Mary**
- 3) **Rosaries**, statues, scapulars, holy water, relics, **medals**
- 4) Pilgrimages

II) Church Polity

A) Centralized institutional structure

- 1) Pope as supreme leader
- 2) Elected upon death by cardinals meeting in Rome

B) Bishops in charge of diocese

- 1) Ordained just as priest, just more authority
- 2) Cardinals and archbishops larger area or prestige
- 3) Authority over people in diocese, meet together
- 4) Variety of attitudes about theology—conservatives or liberals

C) Priests (“Father”)

- 1) head of parish, trained in a **seminary**
- 2) authority sometimes shared with parish council
- 3) priests in orders—Dominicans, Franciscans, Servites—special missions

D) Lay people

- 1) Catholic sisters (**nuns, women religious**) and brothers are not ordained and so concerned lay
- 2) Take vows, typically of poverty, chastity and obedience, live in a **convent**